

Mr. Speaker, Congressman *Poe* raises some very good points. One of the major reasons we should be renegotiating NAFTA is to deal with many of the consequences of that trade agreement which was sold as a nirvana for the continent, and there are so many consequences that are harmful to people in this country and to the other two trading partners. So I was very interested in his remarks.

I came down to the floor tonight to talk about liberty. When our Republic was founded, Patrick Henry courageously implored, "Give me liberty or give me death." He put his priority on sacrifice for liberty as the fundamental building block of our Republic, a moral calling of the highest order.

Similarly, as immigrants from far off lands flock to America's shores, they still journey through New York Harbor and read the timeless words at the base of the Statue of Liberty, penned by poet Emma Lazarus, that recall our primary founding moral value: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free."

Freedom is not only what this Nation offers to all who come here legally, but it is the cornerstone upon which our founders built this Nation. America today is navigating a slippery slope that is a departure from our birthright, our Nation's very reason for being. When freedom becomes subjugated to financial dependence on undemocratic regimes or marketplace conveniences, surely we risk losing our way. Those around the world can become disillusioned with our Nation's very reason for being.

Thomas Jefferson stated, "Can liberties of a nation be sure, when we remove their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people, that these liberties are a gift from God?" He clearly means we should not take the abundance of our Nation in whatever form and squander it or take it for granted.

I become concerned myself when pecuniary interests trump human rights. With China's now becoming the chief holder of U.S. Treasury debt, one must ask, "What comes first, liberty or bondage?"

Whether it is human freedom in China or repressive theocracies across the Middle East or dictatorships in Africa, Asia or Latin America, at what point does our growing financial dependence sully America's birthright, which is liberty first, last and always?

I stand here, amazed, that yet again the wise Thomas Jefferson issued, for posterity, a warning as follows: ``If the American people ever allow private banks to control the issue of currency first by inflation, then by deflation, the banks and corporations that will grow up around them will deprive the people of all property until their children wake up homeless on the continent their fathers conquered." Imagine how many years ago he said that.

My friends, my dear colleagues and my fellow citizens, we must take a strong and devout look at where we are and how we got here. Our financial dependence on foreign regimes has compromised our very birthright. It was with sadness that I watched our able Secretary of State dance on eggshells on her recent trip to Beijing. It is Lady Liberty that must inspire us to recapture our freedom for our own posterity.

Surely, Thomas Jefferson would like that.